



SEAPORT

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO: CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS, & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Seaport's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased in May to 4.1 percent from April's rate of 4.2 percent, as shown in Seaport Table 1. In May 2001, the rate was 4.2 percent. May's *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased 590 jobs from April 2002, but only increased 40 from May 2001. Most of the increase since April was in *Construction, Services* and *Trade*. In *Construction*, employment increases can be attributed to road work and industrial construction crews. In both *Services* and *Trade* sectors, employment increased from April 2002, but both are lagging behind last year's levels. Since last year, significant employment decreases were recorded in *Agricultural Services* and *Auto Repair Services*.

SPECIAL TOPIC:

New Information from the 2000 Census

With the University of Idaho in its backyard, more than 40 percent of Moscow residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. That's far and away the highest percentage in the state, which averages 22 percent, according to recently released detailed 2000 Census data for Idaho. The information was taken from the long form that was distributed to about one in six Idaho residents. The form requested information on a variety of topics, from marital status and ancestry to personal income and housing costs. Regarding one such topic, residents of Elk River reported one of the state's longest median commutes at 48 minutes. The tiny community of Onaway, north of Moscow, reported that 46 percent of its households have three or more cars; 64 percent of the residents of Ferdinand, just north of Cottonwood, reported German ancestry.

But the census data also reaffirmed the fact that rural Idaho continues to lag far behind the urban and resort areas of the state in terms of household income, further isolating rural areas from the economic boom the state experienced during the last decade. Both Lewis County, at \$31,413, and Idaho County, at \$29,515, ranked toward the bottom for median household income. Ada County ranked toward the top with a median household

Seaport Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Nez Perce County, Idaho, and Asotin County, Washington

	May 2002*	April 2002	May 2001	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	34,800	34,440	34,850	1.0	-0.1
Unemployment	1,420	1,460	1,450	-2.7	-2.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.1	4.2	4.2	-0.1	0.1
Total Employment	33,380	32,990	33,400	1.2	-0.1
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	34,880	34,550	34,920	1.0	-0.1
Unemployment	1,310	1,490	1,330	-12.1	-1.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.8	4.3	3.8	-0.5	0.0
Total Employment	33,570	33,060	33,590	1.5	-0.1
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	26,060	25,470	26,020	2.3	0.2
Goods-Producing Industries	5,330	4,970	5,240	7.2	1.7
Mining & Construction	1,580	1,270	1,540	24.4	2.6
Manufacturing	3,750	3,700	3,700	1.4	1.4
Food Processing	70	70	100	0.0	-30.0
Lumber & Wood Products	660	650	680	1.5	-2.9
Paper Products	1,680	1,680	1,650	0.0	1.8
All Other Manufacturing	1,340	1,300	1,270	3.1	5.5
Service-Producing Industries	20,730	20,500	20,780	1.1	-0.2
Transportation	1,370	1,350	1,370	1.5	0.0
Communications & Utilities	270	280	280	-3.6	-3.6
Wholesale Trade	960	930	960	3.2	0.0
Retail Trade	4,970	4,900	5,020	1.4	-1.0
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,390	1,380	1,400	0.7	-0.7
Services	6,590	6,540	6,890	0.8	-4.4
Government Administration	2,730	2,730	2,630	0.0	3.8
Government Education	2,450	2,390	2,230	2.5	9.9

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

income of \$46,140. That ranked just below Blaine County, where Sun Valley is located, for the highest median income. But those same residents in Lewis County have seen their median home value skyrocket 105 percent since 1990, when it was \$38,500, contrasting with \$78,900 in 2000. The median home value in Ada County has increased only 77 percent.

The disparities in census data between urban and rural become even more evident at the city level. Communities like Lewiston have maintained a fairly strong median household income of \$36,606, as compared with \$42,432 for Boise. But for communities like Weippe, which registered a me-

Seaport Table 2: 2000 Census Data

County	High School or higher	Bachelor's degree or higher	Median Home Income	Poverty status	Home Value
Clearwater	80.1%	13.4%	\$32,071	13.5%	\$80,500
Idaho	82.9%	14.4%	\$29,515	16.3%	\$88,600
Latah	91.0%	41.0%	\$32,524	16.7%	\$126,400
Lewis	84.2%	14.8%	\$31,413	12.0%	\$78,900
Nez Perce	85.5%	18.9%	\$36,282	12.2%	\$105,800
State of Idaho	84.7%	21.7%	\$37,572	11.8%	\$106,300

dian household income of only \$26,442 in 1999, it's been a losing struggle. The lack of industrial diversification in rural areas has forced communities like Pierce and Weippe to live and die by the strength or weakness of the timber industry. To counter the lack of diversification in rural areas, the State of Idaho has allocated \$3.6 million for rural economic development over the next year.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Clearwater County

- Construction has begun for a new King's Discount Department Store in Orofino on the corner of 130th Street and Highway 12 next to Barney's Excell. King's is owned by Tom King of Burley, Idaho. Last year a King's store also was built and opened in Grangeville. The Orofino store will employ 18 to 20 people and should open by late this summer. Dale Fletcher, the Clearwater County building inspector, said the building will be over 1,800-square feet and will include 63 parking places, two of which will be reserved as handicapped spaces. The company plans to act as their own general contractor, but will hire local subcontractors to assist with some aspects of the project.

Idaho & Lewis Counties

- The Northwest Passage Scenic Byway is one of three picturesque routes through northern Idaho. This highway system will receive a portion of a \$20 million grant available from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Scenic Byways Program. The Northwest Passage Scenic Byway passes through the Clearwater River canyon from the junction of U.S. 95 and U.S. 12 near Spalding, and then leaves the river, climbing south to the Camas Prairie. Along the way are numerous Nez Perce cultural sites and Lewis and Clark Expedition campsites. The Nez Perce National Historical Park Museum at Spalding features displays, cultural demonstrations, and a historical movie featuring the traditions of the Nez Perce Tribe. Projects that are eligible for funding under this program include those that will inventory, preserve, and enhance the qualities of the byway; projects involving safety improvements; and construction of bike and pedestrian facilities.
- Newt Systems has opened in Grangeville and is located at 221 West Main, Suite 5. The business sells a variety of computer products and services from designing, building, and selling computer systems to repairing and maintaining computer networks. Newt also offers retail computer parts — everything from hard drives to specially-sized screws. If business owners are unsure of what kind of computer equipment they need, Newt Systems will make on-site visits and make purchase recommendations. The business builds and hosts Web sites, helps people create spreadsheets or databases, and provides instruction on how to use them.

Latah County

- Construction has begun on Park Place Plaza, a professional office condominium project at the Alturas

Technology Park in east Moscow. The new office building will be 10,290-square feet when completed. The first phase includes five offices — three are condominiums for sale and two will be rented. All tenants will share a conference room. Alturas began in 1997 with the idea that Moscow could lure technology companies to town or grow its own technology businesses from start-up companies developed at the University of Idaho business incubator. As an incentive to developers, below ground infrastructure was installed by the Moscow Urban Renewal Agency. Three buildings already have been constructed at Alturas. Two locally developed technology companies occupy two buildings almost entirely. A Moscow law firm built the third structure. Tenants for the newest building include Beckett Accounting, Economic Modeling Specialists, specializing in land management and transportation, McKetta and Associates, specializing in natural resources economics, Ccbenefits, specializing in the economics of higher education, and ABSEARCH, an Asbury Street business that provides electronic databases about wildlife, ecology, and fisheries through the Internet. City planners have approved all of the businesses that will reside inside the special research and technology office zone created for Alturas.

Nez Perce County & Asotin Counties

- The organization that operates St. Joseph Regional Medical Center in Lewiston may soon merge with the nation's largest Catholic, not-for-profit health system. Ascension Health and Carondelet Health System, which owns St. Joseph Regional Medical Center, have signed a letter of intent to negotiate a merger, which could be completed by the end of the year. Headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, Ascension Health has more than 60 hospitals in 15 states and the District of Columbia. The Carondelet Health System operates 15 hospitals in eight states, including Idaho. St. Joseph Regional Medical Center is among the region's largest employers with 880 full- and part-time workers. Patients and employees will not be affected if the merger proceeds, said Doug Johnson, chief financial officer of the medical center. The organizational shift would improve the buying power and credit rating of the Carondelet Health System, something that would control costs and preserve jobs at the Lewiston site, said Howard Hayes, administrator of St. Joseph Regional Medical Center. Hayes believes the change also might help with the hospital's specialist shortage. Ascension has 159 residency programs that train new doctors and the merger might give St. Joseph Regional Medical Center a chance to recruit them.

Doug Tweedy, Regional Labor Economist
1158 Idaho Street, Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 799-5000 ext. 307
E-mail: dtweedy@jobservice.us